

Catholic Youth Organization

Coaches Handbook



Diocese of Toledo



CYO Mission |

The Catholic Youth Organization, as a component of the Discipleship & Family Life Department within the Diocese of Toledo, assists the Bishop in his teaching mission by serving, challenging, and supporting the leaders of youth formation and education who minister in parishes and in the Diocese of Toledo.

Focus |

The Catholic Youth Organization is an athletic program designed to be a character-builder for youth. The ideals of good sportsmanship and Christianity shall be our overriding influence.

CYO Athletics is viewed as a faith-building effort for participating members. Our program is an effective tool that invites, welcomes, and involves any person into the life of a faith-based community. The inter-relationship of CYO Athletics with family life, parish life. And school life is essential.

CYO promotes participation and inclusion for all team members for practices and games. Inclusion cultivates empathy and breaks down social barriers supporting development of friendships and building community.

“Everyone who wants to join in sports should be welcomed, he said, “not just the best, but everyone, with the advantages and limitations that everyone has, indeed, focusing in the most disadvantaged, as did Jesus” – *Pope Francis*

Spiritual Formation |

The greatest challenge of a youth coach is to develop the players on their team into better Christian people who will make their family and community proud. A coach must never underestimate the influence which they have on their players and parents.

“To belong to a sports team means to reject all forms of selfishness and isolation – it is an opportunity to meet and be with others, to help each other, to compete in mutual esteem and grow in a brotherhood.” -*Pope Francis*

- The Athletic Director, as a leader in the parish, sets an example and reflects the CYO mission to the coaches and parents.
- A coach develops a vision to share the love and message of God with the team and implements this in their coaching by leading by example.
- CYO prayer is recited in unity before all CYO games and activities.
- Team faith building
 - Prayer before and/or after practices
 - Team Mass and encourage to meet with parish pastoral leader.
 - CYO is providing end of game prayer for teams to come together at the game to reunite teams in prayer.

Invest in Our Youth |

CYO is a 501(c)(3) Non-profit organization with a beautiful outdoor sports complex home to our parish teams and league for cross-country, flag football, soccer, and softball/baseball teams. With increasing everyday cost and in hopes of improvements throughout the seasons/years, CYO established an “Invest in Our Youth” for CYO sponsorships.

- The CYO Complex is named after Monsignor Jerome Schmit.
- Appointed to Catholic Charities he was named assistant director of CYO. Under his guidance, CYO evolved into the most successful unit in the state.
- Monsignor Schmit expanded the Catholic Club Ministry to inner city youth and further expanded CYO athletics, cultural and spiritual activities to the entire Diocese of Toledo.
- Parish/school teams enter the league with a team fee, with practice availability at the CYO Monsignor Schmit Athletic Complex included in that fee.

The day-to-day operations at the complex continue to grow and costs do as well. Invest in Our Youth is another way of supporting our young athletes and CYO.

Coaches Eligibility & Responsibilities |

All CYO Coaches and team volunteers must be approved by the parish pastoral leader and/or athletic director. Any coach under the age of 24 must meet with and receive written approval from the parish pastoral leader. This approval letter must be kept on file at the parish office and a copy forwarded to the CYO Office.

The following are the required coaching certifications and/or courses for CYO Coaching eligibility.

Course/Certification		Website/source
CYO Initial Coaching Certification	New coaches. One time in person class, unless CYO eligibility is not renewed following season. (1yr)	Approval from Parish leader/Athletic Director to access registration link.
Protecting Gods Children	With Initial Certification Class	Online course – Virtusonline.org
Lindsey’s Law/Sudden Cardiac Arrest	Both certifications are accepted and are a yearly (1yr) renewal.	https://toledodiocese.org/cyo-coaches-certification or NFHSLearn.org
Concussion in Sports	Every 3yrs	NFHSLearn.org
Background Check	Every 5yrs	Virtusonline.org
CYO Re-Certification	Renew every year (1yr)	https://franciscanathome.com/

When attending an Initial Certification, it is best to complete all other certifications prior to the CYO Initial Certification date. This will ensure you leave with your CYO Lanyard and leave as a Certified CYO Coach.

In addition to these certifications, the following forms need to be acknowledged and signed. CYO does go over these forms in both the Initial Certification and the Re-Certification course.

CYO Forms		Source
Coaches Code of Ethics	Every year (1yr)	Initial Certification and Re-cert
Acknowledge of Standard and Guidelines	Every year (1yr)	Initial Certification and Re-cert
Diocese of Toledo Standards and Guidelines	Every year (1yr)	Initial Certification and Re-cert

All parish/school athletics are independent and have their own procedures, policies and responsibilities for their coaches. Noted will be some key details to assist coaches for a successful season.

- Communication with the parish/school AD
 - The CYO Calendar has key dates for deadlines for team entries, rosters submissions, start date for league games, tournament entry, and potential end date of the season.
 - Coaches should have an idea when these dates are to make sure you and your team is all set for the season.
 - Team rosters and player eligibility. Details on player eligibility are on page 6 and coaches can assist ADs to make sure physical, player fees turn into AD and any other parish/school requirements are met before practices and games.
 - Rosters are official with the signature and approval from parish pastor/al leader. This is needed to confirm that student athletes and coaches meet CYO eligibility.
 - League schedules will be posted by CYO, and it is the responsibility of the coach to communicate all game dates and times with parents. Continued communication would include game changes and/or any weather delays.
 - A pre-season parent meeting is a good practice for coaches to establish with their teams to start a strong communication channel with all parents.
- Leadership and being a role model
 - Coaches are a role model to the youth on their team and should portray leadership amongst the parents. They are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner displaying proper bench decorum as representation of the parish/school.
 - Fully knowing and understanding the rules for the sport(s) to teach to players and parents in the letter and in the spirit.
 - Respect the integrity and judgement of game officials. Approaching an official in a calm, composed manner to ask a question will not only keep the atmosphere in a positive light but will show that you as a coach have the situation under control for parents not wanting to join in. Disagreements with judgement calls will happen but it is the reaction we have and how we decide to present ourselves is when things will or will not escalate.
 - Teaching the art of winning and losing with good sportsmanship. Win with dignity and lose with grace.



- Overall, the coach is responsible for the conduct not only for themselves but also for their coaching staff, players, and parents. Reminding all that you a team and a representative of the parish/school in the catholic community.

Good Sportsmanship|

- Good Sportsmanship is an integral part of the CYO program, and the Coach is the prime example. There are four elements of sportsmanship. They are fairness, equity, good form and the will to win. They are equally important and need to be balanced for true sportsmanship to be demonstrated. However, these elements can sometimes conflict, such as when someone wants to win more than play fairly or follow the CYO all play policy.
- Here are some examples of good sportsmanship to keep in mind while coaching and leading by example.
 - Empathy: understanding and respecting the feelings and perspective of others.
 - Respect: Treating others with dignity and consideration for their abilities and efforts.
 - Positive Attitude: See the positive side of things and give your best effort.
 - Support: Encourage and teach supporting teammates and avoid criticizing if mistakes are made. This also holds true for officials and opposing teams.
 - Responsibility: Taking responsibility for your actions during a game.
 - Be Kind: Show kindness to an injured player and consideration to others' well-being.
 - Cheering: Teach cheering positively for your team and teammates only, as it is not good faith to cheer negatively towards others.
- Discipline and Accountability
 - Disciplinary action may be taken if unruly behavior is exhibited at a CYO event.
 - Disciplinary action may be taken
 - For instance, a coach, player, parent or spectator that participates in any flagrant or unsportsmanlike behavior will be penalized. This behavior can be before, during or after a game and does not exclude any forms of social media.
 - They may be suspended from one game up to the remainder of the season, or permanently if the offense warrants further action.
 - Unacceptable CYO behaviors include
 - Use of profane language or gestures
 - Vandalism or the destruction of property
 - Verbal or physical abuse of players, coaches, opponents, or officials.
 - Use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products before, during or after contest.
 - Knowingly using an ineligible player
 - CYO certified coach allowing someone else to wear his/her CYO lanyard will face suspension from the CYO program.
 - Game Reports are available on the CYO website to report any positive or negative actions that may occur during a game.
 - If anyone associated with the team, coaches, players, and spectators are ejected from a game, a game report must be filled out and submitted to the CYO office. This must be done before that individual is allowed to attend and/or participate in another CYO contest. Failure to abide by this may result in a forfeit of a contest.
 - CYO Athletics is a parish-sponsored event taking place at school, parish, and CYO complex and is under the "Safe Schools Ordinance." No person shall assault, strike, threaten or menace an official, coach, participant or spectator. Whoever violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree.

Transportation Liability|

- Coaches who, with the permission of the parish leader, transport youth athletes to an approved parish or diocesan function, are not personally liable for injury or damage that may occur unless:
 - They actively approve or participate in a specific act or omission which causes injury or damage.
 - They later ratify a prior act of omission or another with full knowledge of the event.
 - They are involved in willful or intentional misconduct.
- If a personally owned automobile is used for any parish or diocesan related transportation purpose, it is recommended that the driver should be at least 25 years of age and provide their own bodily injury and property damage insurance and show a valid driver's license and insurance policy information to the parish leadership upon request.

Supervision of Youth |

- The responsibility for the care and custody of youth rest with the CYO coach, parish athletic director and ultimately the pastor/al leader. These adults serve “in loco parentis” (in place of parents) and have the authority to guide and teach athletes to behave appropriately for unsportsmanlike behavior and manage their emotions and feelings.
- Adult behavior with children
 - Adults should use prudence in relating to child and should be aware of behavior which could be open to misinterpretation by others. Situations that may lend themselves to opportunities for abuse or even to the perception of opportunity for abuse, should be avoided.
 - Fraternalization between youth and those who work or volunteer with youth is prohibited. Non-permissible fraternization includes any behavior (verbal or physical) or a sexual, illegal, or age-inappropriate nature as deemed inappropriate for a particular child by the administration of the parish.
 - Employees, staff and volunteers involved in improprieties with youth will NOT be supported by the Diocese, rather the offender(s) will be fully prosecuted of the law.
 - The church must be a firm defender of child’s rights regardless of the alleged abuser’s identity.
 - The relationship between the employee (volunteer) and youth must always be one of adult to child, governed by the moral standards of the Church, the legal standards of the State of Ohio and common sense. As such, the policy prohibits fraternization not only during youth activities, but at any time or any place, unless some separate (family) relationship exists.
- Child Abuse/Neglect
 - It is a criminal offense for any person who has custody or control over youth to create a substantial risk to a youth’s health or safety by violating any duty of care, protection, or support. Further, it is a criminal offense to punish, discipline, or restrain a youth maliciously, in an excessive or cruel manner or for a prolonged period to create a substantial risk of physical or mental harm to the youth. ***Anyone who suspects that a youth is being abused or neglected must report the information to the pastor/al leader for report to an appropriate agency.***
 - **NEGLECTED:** Defined as any person under 18 years of age who is abandoned by their parents or guardian, and lacks proper parental support and care, such as necessary sustenance, education, or medical care, perhaps including and apparent lack of grooming.
 - **ABUSED:** Defined as a youth who is suspected of being a victim of sexual contact or conduct, or one who exhibits evidence of intentional injury.
- Gangs/Gang-Related Activity
 - The possession of weapons, dangerous, or illegal objects at any CYO contest is prohibited.
 - The presentation of gang “identifiers” at any CYO athletic contest is prohibited. Any participant, coach or referee who is wearing anything that has been labeled against this policy will be denied the opportunity to participate.
 - Coaches who suspect a player or official in the CYO program is involved in gang activity should report their suspicions to the CYO Office.
- Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Weapons
 - The use and/or possession of non-prescribed drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or a weapon by a player, coach, official or spectator at any CYO athletic contest or practice session is prohibited. ***Coaches who discover a player in violation of this rule should notify the athlete’s parents as well as the parish pastor and parish athletic director.***

Safety Regulations |

- Coaches are to inspect the playing environment prior to practices or games.
- Teams are strongly encouraged to carry a first aid kit with them at all games and practices.
- Coaches must provide access to drinking water and regular water breaks during practice. Denying players water is not permitted as discipline.
- Coaches should be aware of proper first aid/sports medicine procedures and care for treating any injuries where communicable diseases could be transmitted. *NFHS Learn.com has a course called First Aid, Health and Safety for \$45.-This is not a mandatory certification*
- Ensure that all equipment is in good condition and up to safety regulations. They should also make sure the equipment properly fits the players and used correctly.
- Emergency Medical Authorization Forms should be filled out at the time of player registration. Coaches need to have copies and/or access during all practices and games.



- In case of a youth's illness or accident, notification of parents is required before action is taken or as soon as possible thereafter.
- When it is impossible to notify parents before acting, the procedures agreed by the parents on the youth's current Emergency Medical Authorization Form are to be followed.
- It is prohibited to give any youth medication unless they have been given a written request by the player's parent/legal guardian. All personnel should be informed that the administration of any drug without the order of the physician and permission of parent or guardian could be interpreted as practicing medicine and is therefore, prohibited by law.
- In the event of an injury during a game or practice:
 - Take the time to evaluate the injuries
 - Parents must be notified by the coach whenever an injury occur.
 - If the injury is severe for parents to take to Urgent Care or the Emergency Room, they must have a written medical release/clear to play from a medical professional.
 - Concussion protocol must be followed until the player has a medical release and must be released by M.D.
- The CYO program will follow the procedures outlined in the NFHS regulations for each specific sport regarding participation with a cast. It is strongly recommended by CYO that any athlete wearing a cast not participate until their injury is completely healed and the cast has been removed.
- The Diocese of Toledo, CYO Office and all their agents, in no way will assume responsibility for injuries sustained in games or practices. Every player must be insured by his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) through an acceptable insurance program.

Emergency Action Plan|

- At the Monsignor Schmit Athletic Complex
 - League and Tournament play, CYO provides an Athletic Trainer will be on site under the medical (CYO) tent, located at the center of the complex.
 - AED is located to the right of the Concessions Stand window.
- Roles of the Athletic Trainer
 - Emergency equipment retrieval.
 - Immediate evaluation and care of the more seriously injured or ill student-athletes.
 - *Activation of emergency medical system (EMS).
 - *911 call (provide name, address, telephone number; number of individuals injured; condition of injured.
 - first aid treatment; specific directions; other information as requested.
 - Return to play decision-making on the injured student-athlete.
 - Physician referral of the injured student-athlete.
 - Contacting the parent(s) of the injured student-athlete.
- Roles of Coaches/Administrators
 - Ensure emergency entrance to the Complex is clear and accessible.
 - Unlock and open gates for EMS to access complex.
 - Direct EMS personnel (ambulance) to scene
 - Scene control: limit scene to sports medicine personnel and move bystanders (including other athletes) away from the area of injured athlete.
- Coaches should have an Emergency Action Plan at the location of practices when no Athletic Trainer is on site.
 - For all practices and games, coaches should have
 - Fully stocked first aid kit
 - Know where to locate and how to handle the AED device at that location
 - Cell phone within reasonable distance
 - Designate who will call 9-1-1 if a serious injury or incident arises
 - Care/comfort/treat athlete until medical help arrives
 - Contact your Athletic Director within 24hrs and complete the incident report.
 - It is school and parish standard policy the incident reports are done for all times in which a student-athlete requires immediate hospital care – including practices and games.
 - CYO Injury reports are accessible on the CYO Website.

Parent Meeting |

- It may not initially seem important to plan and hold a parent meeting as a CYO coach, but this is a great opportunity to build the team, communication, and community. This is the time to share your team procedures and expectations of the upcoming season. Any changes that may have been made by CYO and to go over any new rules. CYO rules for all sports are available on the CYO website for coaches and parents to always have. We encourage this to also be the time to remind parents about the CYO mission, good sportsmanship and the reason why we are all here, for the children.

Coaches Checklist |

- Complete criminal background check through Virtus and the Diocese of Toledo
- Attend Initial/Re Certification course
 - Coaches Code of Ethics
 - Diocese of Toledo Standards and Guidelines
 - Acknowledgement of Standards and Guidelines
- Complete NFHS Concussion Awareness
- Complete Lindsay's Law/Sudden Cardiac Arrest (every twelve months)
- Obtain coaches lanyard for current season
- Obtain current sport-specific rules and become familiarized with CYO Policies and Proc
- Arrange a Player-Parent meeting to review deadlines, practice schedules, and expectations
 - Collect Emergency Medical Forms and ensure players are eligible for the team/season
 - Distribute season schedules

Privacy Policy |

- When coaches are emailed information from the CYO Office, they will be Bcc'd so email addresses are protected.
- Contact information for coaches will NOT be provided to any fundraising companies.
- Participants' information may be provided to the Catholic High schools to announce athletic camp information, but information will not be provided to any other outside group.

Players Eligibility |

Any boy or girl who meets the CYO eligibility requirements must be given the opportunity to participate on a CYO parish team. The philosophy of the CYO program does not include any "cutting" of children who wish to participate.

- Private Catholic School
 - Students enrolled in a private catholic school are eligible.
- Public/Charter School
 - Students must be members of the sponsoring parish to play on the parish team or parent(s)/legal guardians are registered members of that participating parish.
- Home School
 - All elementary students who are receiving home instruction in accordance with Ohio Rev. Code are eligible if they are members of the sponsoring parish to play on their parish team. A player may not participate on a parish team other than the one in which their parents or legal guardians are registered members.
- If parents and/or legal guardians are registered members of more than one parish, the player must designate the parish in which they will compete for the current school year. This will be decided by virtue of the parish at which they play their first sport.
 - A player is not permitted to switch from the designated parish during the school year unless that parish does not sponsor a team in a particular sport.
 - This rule applies to a player who attends school at a parish other than the one in which his/her parents are registered members.
 - If a family has joined more than one parish without physically moving residence within the past twelve months.
 - The CYO Office will review each case individually and make a final decision regarding eligibility.
- Players must register with their home parish/school first rather if their parish will be able to field a team or not.
 - When a parish does not have a team in a particular sport, the player from that parish may request to play on a neighboring parish team.



- Parish Athletic Directors can communicate amongst each other to assist other parishes to build teams and to make sure these student-athletes have a place to play.
- Players are not permitted to be listed on more than one CYO team roster for a particular sport.
 - Violation for this will be a suspension for at least an equal number of games for which they participated in illegally.
 - The head coach playing the ineligible player will be suspended for at least five games.
 - The team may be suspended from the post-season tournament.
- Use of ineligible players results in an automatic forfeit to the opposing team in all games which the ineligible player participated in.
- Late additions to the roster are permitted by submitting "Late Roster Addition" form only up to the midpoint of the regular season, unless otherwise specified in the league rules.
- No player may play for OHSAA or MHSAA member school team (junior high or high school) and a CYO team in the same sport during the same sport season.
- In accordance with the diocesan policy statement on gender-related matters
 - Participation on athletic teams and extra-curricular activities will be according to the person's biological sex.
 - Uniforms and gender specific dress, bathrooms, locker rooms, and sponsored activities will be according to biological sex.
 - Names and pronouns will be in accordance with the person's biological sex.

Grade and Competitive League Division |

All exceptions to the following division separations must be approved in writing by the Director of CYO Athletics.

Grade Divisions	Pee Wee	Minor	Cadet	Junior	High School
Cross-Country	Kindergarten & 1 st	2 nd & 3 rd	4 th , 5 th , 6 th	7 th & 8 th	
Flag Football	1 st & 2 nd	3 rd & 4 th			
Volleyball		3 rd & 4 th	5 th & 6 th	7 th & 8 th	9 th - 12 th
Basketball		3 rd & 4 th	5 th & 6 th	7 th & 8 th	9 th - 12 th
Softball		3 rd & 4 th	5 th & 6 th	7 th & 8 th	
Track and Field			4 th , 5 th , 6 th	7 th & 8 th	

BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
0% Experience & no club/travel players on roster.	50% Experience with >4 club/travel players on roster.	80% Experience with 5< club/travel players on roster

Level Divisions | To assist CYO with competitive equality of teams, we will be adopting for the 2024-2025 season Level Divisions. When team entries are submitted, it will be the responsibility of the Parish/school to select which level division their team(s) fit in best. The breakdown/explanation and guidelines of the level divisions are listed below. It is the discretion of the coach who knows their players and team the best

Bronze | Entry level - 0% experience

- No club/travel players on the team roster.
- Team Roster Grade Combination
 - If a team is a combo grade within the same grade division, primarily of the younger grade.
(Ex. Cadet 5th/6th - Roster total 9: 6 -5th graders, 3 - 6th graders.) = Cadet: Bronze

Silver | 50%-79% experience

- Up to 4 club/ travel players on the team roster.
- Team Roster Grade Combination
- If a team is a combo grade within the same grade division, primarily of the older grade.
(Ex. Cadet 5th/6th - Roster total 9: 2 -5th graders, 7 - 6th graders.) = Cadet: Silver
- If a team is a combo grade within two grade divisions, primarily of the younger grades.
(Ex. Minor/Cadet 3rd/4th/5th - Roster total 9: 4 - 3rd graders, 4 -4th graders, 1 - 5th graders.) = Minor: Silver

Gold | Competitive

- 80% -100% experience
- Five or more club/travel players on the team roster.
- Team Roster Grade Combination
 - Discretion of the coach and parish.

CYO League Play |

- No CYO League game/match will be scheduled to begin on a Sunday prior to 1pm
- Regular season team scheduling conflicts with parish and/or school events must be submitted with the team entry form.
- Once league schedules are posted
 - Changes requested unless due to unforeseen circumstances, parish/school events will not be honored.
 - The CYO will assist in communication between Athletic Directors and coaches to make sure that game is played.
 - No call/no show to a game/match will result in a forfeit to the opposing team.
 - This forfeit could be lifted if agreed upon by the opposing team/parish to schedule the miss game as a make-up game.
- Balanced Calendar Academic Schedule
 - Some elementary parish schools have adopted the *Balanced Calendar Academic Schedule*. This schedule includes fall and spring breaks. These breaks are not scheduled simultaneously with each other. The CYO office will attempt to work with parish athletic directors and coaches with any schedule conflicts during these times.
- Forfeits
 - Any team who forfeits two games without notifying CYO staff at least 24hours prior to the scheduled game may not have the opportunity to make up these missed games.
- Playing Up a Grade
 - A player may play up a grade division on a different roster for the same school for the following reasons only
 - In the event of forfeiture for the team in need of additional players.
 - The following must also be considered
 - Coaches for both teams must agree the student-athlete is prepared to play at a higher level in a way that is safe and in their best interest.
 - Communication with parish/school Athletic Director is a must.
 - Approval and communication with CYO Office.
 - Play Up a Grade form will need to be completed prior or within 24hrs of the game/match the player moved up.
 - Form will include the players name, original grade division and team, approval from coach, parents and athletic director.

CYO Tournament Play |

- Tournaments will be held for 5th – High school divisions in all team sports.
 - Scores will be kept along with outcomes and standings.
- Tournament seeding will be based on the regular season standings overall win %
 - Tiebreakers
 - Head-to-Head
 - Points/goals allowed ratio
 - Total of points/goals a team has allowed
 - Dived by the total games played
 - Coin flip
- Parish/schools with multiple teams in the same division will be placed in opposite halves of the bracket.
 - If these teams still meet up in tournament play, they will have the decision to play the game/match as scheduled or if this is the Championship game – both teams must agree to be Co-Champions.
 - Co-Champions options is selected the teams will receive the championship and runner-up trophy.



- CYO wants to praise and promote our faith, community and good sportsmanship.
 - After the match, teams will award a player from the opposing team the “CYO Good Faith and Sportsmanship” Award.
 - This player could have shown good faith and sportsmanship directly towards one’s team or by continually cheering and being a positive light for their own team.

CYO Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for bringing us together today and ask that you watch and guide over us.
Help the athletes use their talents to the fullest and remain injury free.
Help the coaches to teach these young athletes not only about the game, but more importantly, about being good Christians.
Help the game officials do their best to enforce the rules and remain fair at all times.
And help the spectators to be considerate of all players, coaches, officials and each other.
Thank you for giving all of us the opportunity to put our faith into action today.
-Amen-

CYO Post Game Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the opportunity and challenge of this game.
You call us to compete well, finish the race, and grow in our faith!
Help us to remember we can do all things through you, who give us strength.
-Amen